A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, January 22. 1708.

WELL, Gentlemen, I hope you will excuse us making one Paper for your Mirth, tho' it be by a Digression from the ſerious Subject I am upon.

And to ſatisfie your Curioſity, I think, I may begin with the old Song.

Now at laſt the Riddle is expounded, &c.

To divert you with ſomething agreeable to this Time of the Year, behold, I gave you an *Enigma*, and a Prize for the Diſcovery: To tell you, I thought no Body would find it out, had been a Scandal to your own Judgment, and to my own good Manners; it was done to divert you, as well as employ you; and I am far from thinking the Prize ill beſtow'd.

Indeed I muſt complain of one Hardſhip, *viz.* That the Gentlemen out of Town ſhould be ſo very obliging to ſend up their Opinion by the Poſt, and leave the Author to pay the Poſtage; and when I tell you of 14 or 15 Letters of that Kind, you will allow that's a little too hard.

Well, Gentlemen, I am firſt to tell you, that the Riddle was explain'd in a Paper ſeal'd up, and left at the Printer's the ſame Day of its being publiſh'd, and was never open'd but in the Preſence of all that pleaſed to come, and I hope to their Satisfaction.

Next I am to own a Difficulty happen'd by Reaſon of a Miſconſtruction of the Words, ANY PERSON, which ſome would have conſtrued, EVERY PERSON, by which if Twenty or a Hundred had found out the Riddle within the eight Days, they had Each a Title to the three Volumes of the *Review*; but this, I hope, is adjuſted to Satisfaction.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, I am to tell you, that the *Ænigma* was fairly ſolv'd, and the Prize gain'd by a Gentleman, who ſent the very direct Thing in a Letter on the *Mondry* Morning after the Publication, as you ſhall ſee by the Copy of the Solution left ſeal'd as above, and the Gentleman's Letter, both which follow.

The Explanation left with the Printer.

The RIDDLE ſignifies,

THE Firr-Trees *dug out of the Moſſes and Mariſh Grounds in* Lancaſhire, *and ſeveral of our* Northern *Countries, where theſe Trees are found ſeveral Foot under Ground, entirely cover'd, and are ſuppoſed to have lain there ever ſince the Flood, yet are firm and good, and as full of Sap, as if growing above Ground.*

(a) *They are found ſometimes* 10 *or* 12 *Foot deep, ſometimes much more.*

Neither Nature *or* Reaſon *could ſuggeſt their being there, or how they came there.*

(c) *They are ſplit out in ſmall Peices, and are ſo full of Tarr, that the poorer Country People uſe them inſtead of Candles.*

(d) *In* Building; *for drawing of* Tarr *or* Turpentine; *their* Aſhes *for* Glaſs; *and it may be uſed for* Carving, *as other Wood.*

The Aſhes *will* melt into Metal *for* Glaſs, *the* Wood *will burn into* Aſhes.

Fluid, *as above,* (d) *when melted; or fluid in the* Juice, *which is the* Tarr *or* Turpentine; Solid, *as in* Wood.

Round *and* Tall, *the Shape of a Tree.*

Born in the Dark, *i. e. Under-ground*; help to ſee, *ut ſupra,* (c)

Live, *i. e. ſwim in the Water*; (fly) *made into Arrows.*

Subſtance; Aſhes *will vitrifie, but not conſume.*

Grow; *they certainly grow, tho' have no Leaves*; all the Elements *are in the Wood, as in other Sorts.*

Buried, *ut ſupra,* (a) — Turpentine *is Phyſical in many Caſes.*

Wonder; *they are ſtrange, reſpecting the Place they are found in: but not at all ſtrange in themſelves, being a common* Firr.

They will not grow, if ſett above Ground; *nor periſh, if bury'd in the ſame Places they are taken out of.*

Drudge; *they ſerve to all the meaneſt and moſt common Uſes of Timber.*

This is the Author's true Meaning.

The Gentleman's Letter who firſt ſolv'd this *Ænigma.*

SIR,

THere *are* Firr-Trees *found under Ground in* Lancaſhire, *and ſeveral other Parts of the* North, *which anſwer to every Part of the Ænigma, and is therefore propoſed as a Solution thereof by*

Your Servant,

Monday, 11 a Clock.
Jan. 12. 1708.

And. Archer.

I could make this a very diverting Paper, by giving you but a few of about 150 Letters ſent upon this Occaſion to the Author. —Some indeed are very Ingenious, full of Learning, Philoſophy and Sence, among which there are about 20 who gueſs'd it to be *Quick-Silver*, whoſe Letters are too long to inſert here; ſome indeed are full of Mirth and Wit, and of theſe the Two following will I doubt not, pleaſe you as well as did the Authors.

SIR,

I *Have attempted a Solution of your Riddle, which I take to be* Quick-Silver; *if I have nam'd the Thing, you'll pleaſe to excuſe the Poetry.*

Bright Hermes *like Tobacco-Pick,*
Deſtroys the Sound, reſtores the Sick;
Diverts the Town in pleaſing Riddle,
And dances Jiggs without a Fiddle:
Plays Chriſtmas *Gambols in our News,*
And helps th' Expounder to Reviews.

January, 12.
1708.

And

And now for a true Tarr, I cannot but do Justice to the honest Botswain about *Wapping Dock*, whose Letter is so merry and so honest, that I cannot leave it out.

Jan. 15. *6 Glasses of the 3d Watch out.*

I'LL *warrant, Mr.* Review, *you value your self hugely, upon the tangled Piece of Rope you have thrown to the Ingenious to quoil. Oh! how this* Samsonite *would vaunt and strut, could no Body find the End on't; he'd top his Mizenpeak and Bolsprit too, if he could, and look as great as Bull's Beef, or a Bisquet of Brewers. But know, to the Mortification of thy Pride, that I a poor Sailor, a meer Lapland, a wild Beast of the Wilderness of Waters, having spent not half a Watch on considering upon your Riddle, (for whatever Cramp Name you give it, I take that to be the Meaning of it) found out that it could be nothing else but* Quick Silver, *Tho' I don't expect to carry the Prize, (for I did not see your* Review *till to day, and it being so easie a Thing to resolve, no doubt, but somebody has hit the Mark before me) yet I could not forbear telling you, that the hidden Mysteries of Truth are often revealed to Babes, yea, Fools, and so Brother, Farewell.*

From Wapping Dock.

F. L.

Some have guess'd it to be *Iron*, some *Salt*, Abundance *Sea-Coal*, some the Letter *R*, some *I*, some *Brimstone*, some *Sulphur*, according to the Exhalations of their Fancies: One very ingenious Letter with all its Descriptions determines it to be *Reason*, another *the Soul*, another *Faith*, another *the corrupted Will*; Some will have it to be the *Devil*, *tho' by the Way*, I never heard he was to be *dug out of the Earth*, if I mistake not, he is rather found on the *Surface*; another says it is a *Maidenhead*, but I suppose, that Gentleman forgot that it was SOLID; Three or Four say it is *Gold*, but they, I believe, did not study the Difficulty of *Pulverising*, which our Atheists raise as an Objection against the Story of *Aarons* Calf; some have assur'd us it was FIRE, but how they can make that *melt into Metal*, is not joyn'd to the Opinion; one Gentleman says it is a *Gut*, but where the Difficulty lies in Nature and Reason of having a *Gut* be found in the Earth, I suppose he did not consider—One Gentleman well known, but Names are none of our Business, has bestow'd some more Poetry upon it, as follows,

If Argent Vive *Be still alive,*
When bury'd or above,
If it can fly by Help of Fire,
As swift as any Dove;
If common it be as Rascals we see,
On every Looking Glass;
If high as a Tree, we commonly see, Barometer.
When Heat unto Cold doth pass;
If in Pocky Diseases, the Sick it well pleases,
And cures, yet has no Compassion.
If the Gallant and Brave their Noses it save,
'Tis the scandalous Slave of the Nation. Tobacco's Praise.
Then this my Review is steady and true,
The Style of the whole British Nation.

If the Ænigma be hereby resolved, then I expect at the End of eight Days the Volumes of Reviews, *and may present some other Volumes to lay in the Library in Room of 'em.*

January, 15.
1708.

T. E.

At last, Gentlemen, here are a Couple of wise Men met in a Guess, which to me is as much an *Ænigma* as the Riddle it self, and these will have it be the Author of the *Review* himself, meer *D. F.* the very Father so the Bratt: But here arise such a World of Incongruities, that I cannot imagine how they can get them to hit. As, (1.) how can they tell that I can swim; (2.) as for *burning like a Candle*; and (3.) *for flying in the Air*, I must beg their Pardon for the Experiment; again, (4.) as to Melting me, and (5.) Calcining me; I hope, they don't design to vitrifie me into a Looking-Glass, and so set me up for a standing REVIEW; these Gentlemen are therefore desir'd to explain themselves for farther Satisfaction, for who knows what wicked Design may be hid under such wonderful Guesses as these.

As